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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS; U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN
RELATIONS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major dailies focused their front-page news coverage May 11 on a DPP plan to set up a task force next Wednesday to draft a "Resolution on Making Taiwan a Normal Country," to replace the DPP's "Resolution on Taiwan's Future." The other focus on their front pages is former President Lee Teng-hui's participation in a sit-in held by the Taiwan Solidarity Union in front of the Legislative Yuan to protest the delay in passing the Central Government's FY07 budget. In the inner pages, the focus is on TECRO Chief Joseph Wu's hosting a dinner with four presidents and six delegations of Taiwan's diplomatic allies at Twin Oaks in Washington.

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, the pro-independence, mass-circulation "Liberty Times" editorialized that the Taiwan people should not place high hopes only on mainland Chinese tourists, presuming they are allowed to tour Taiwan, and added that the right thing to do is to attract international tourists. The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" questioned in its editorial why it is that Taiwan is not allowed to defend itself by using missiles developed by the island but must instead be armed with costly, U.S.-made weapons?. Emerson Chang, a local scholar, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" that the US has not changed its policy toward Taiwan and added that recent remarks by U.S. officials are only attempts to push Taiwan temporarily to the side. End summary.

13. Cross-Strait Relations

A) "Creating a Normal and Healthy Tourism Business is the Right Thing"

The pro-independence, mass-circulation daily, "Liberty Times" [circulation: 500,000] said in its editorial (05/11):

"... Taiwan's travel and transportation infrastructure has meets the needs of the tourism sector. What we need the most is the strengthening in the quality of services and the upgrading of "software" facilities in order to bring Taiwan's tourism business up to the world standard and therefore attract tourists from the world.

We should not bet all our tourism resources on people from an authoritarian country that has a per capita income of US\$2000. Based on this, we called upon our compatriots not to be bewitched by the 'China dream,' created by [KMT presidential candidate] Ma Ying-jeou. Taiwan needs a tourism business that can retain the country's dignity and sovereignty and is applauded in the world; and a national economic policy composed of 'Taiwan First' and 'Invest in Taiwan' policies allowing the tourism business to develop normally and healthily."

14. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

A) "'Serious' Defense, or Serious Cash?"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (05/11):

"... 'We think that offensive capabilities on either side of the Strait are destabilizing and therefore not in the interest of peace and security,' American Institute in Taiwan Director Stephen Young quoted Dennis Wilder, the senior director for East Asian affairs at the US National Security Council, as saying.

"... One must ask exactly what the U.S. means when it says it is worried about 'offensive capabilities.' How can any serious defense strategist (which one hopes a member of the U.S. National Security Council qualifies as) argue that there is a difference between 'offensive' and 'defensive' capabilities in this day and age?

"The problem is that the U.S. is making no distinction between tactical offense and strategic offense. Do the 'experts' back in Washington truly think that Taiwan is going to start a war with China?

"This is not a realistic concern. Since the U.S. claims the right of pre-emptive attack, why then cannot other nations do the same?

"Given China's hasty buildup of ballistic missiles, advanced fighter aircraft and attempts to create a 'blue water' navy, isn't it prudent for Taiwan to field weapons that can destroy Beijing's warmaking capability before it is too late? Or does Washington believe the only nations that may defend themselves are those armed with costly, U.S.-made weapons?"

B) "There's Art in Putting Taiwan Aside"

Emerson Chang, director of the Department of International Studies at Nan Hwa University, opined in the English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (05/11):
RELATIONS

"Has US policy toward Taiwan changed? Three major developments at the US State Department between May 1 and May 4 have drawn considerable attention.

"First, the 2007 joint statement of the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee on May 1 made no mention of 'encouraging the peaceful resolution of issues concerning the Taiwan Strait through dialogue' contained in the 2005 report.

"Second, US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte testified to the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs that Taiwanese politicians were attempting to change the status quo, including changing the national title, pushing for referendums and constitutional reform.

"Third, American Institute in Taiwan Director Stephen Young said at a press conference that the US does not support Taiwan developing long-range offensive missiles. Academics and politicians in Beijing believe this is the result of improvements in China-US and China-Japan relations, but I believe exactly the opposite -- that this reaction has been caused by heightening China-US tensions, and that it is a measure to relieve those strains.

"... It [i.e. the U.S.] wants to resolve the animosity before China can deploy its anti-intervention strategy [against the U.S.], and it is doing so by reducing China's agitation over Taiwan. This is the reason for the US' recent actions.

"Although the US acts friendly toward China over Taiwan, that doesn't mean Taiwan's strategic importance to the US has decreased. The US intention to establish a US-Japan-Australia-India security partnership in Asia was made plain in this year's consultative committee report. It's very possible that the US will temporarily push Taiwan to the side to resolve internal doubts over the alliance in Australia and India, as well as external obstructions from China and Russia.

"It may be next year by the time the group is completed, and Taiwan's new domestic political situation would already be set. Then

the US could adjust the role that Taiwan should play in its Asia strategy."

YOUNG